

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A telecommunications system having a radio access network comprising:
 2 plural control nodes;
 3 inter-control node links for connecting the plural control nodes;
 4 a handover selection unit which makes a selection regarding which of plural
 5 connections handled by the radio access network should have control thereof moved
 6 from a first control node to another of the plural control nodes to alleviate congestion on
 7 an overloaded one of the inter-control node links, the selection including a
 8 determination of a cost for each of the connections carried by the overloaded link.

1 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the cost for each of the connections carried by
 2 the overloaded link depends on (1) a number of inter-control links involved in the
 3 connection, and (2) an inter-control link bandwidth required by the connection.

1 3. The system of claim 1, wherein the cost for each of the connections carried
 2 by the overloaded link is a product of a number of inter-control links involved in the
 3 connection and an inter-control link bandwidth required by the connection.

1 4. The system of claim 1, wherein the handover selection unit is situated at one
 2 of the plural control nodes.

1 5. The system of claim 1, wherein the handover selection unit is situated at core
 2 network node.

1 6. The system of claim 1, wherein the selection includes a determination of a
 2 most costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link, and wherein the most
 3 costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link becomes a candidate
 4 connection for handover.

1 7. The system of claim 6, wherein the handover selection unit further
 2 determines a target one of the plural control nodes to which the control of the candidate
 3 connection can be handed over, the target control node being a control node involved in
 4 the candidate connection which is farthest from the first control node.

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1 8. The system of claim 1, wherein the handover selection unit makes the
2 selection when an attempt is made to add a new connection or new leg of a connection
3 to the radio access network, and wherein when hand over of control of the candidate
4 connection to the target control node is unacceptable to the network, the handover
5 selection unit decreases a number of the inter-control node links which can be utilized
6 by the new connection or new leg of the connection before reattempting its selection.

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1 9. A method of operating telecommunications system having a radio access
2 network, the radio access network having plural control nodes and inter-control node
3 links for connecting the plural control nodes, wherein the method comprises selecting
4 which of plural connections handled by the radio access network should have control
5 thereof moved from a first control node to another of the plural control nodes to
6 alleviate congestion on an overloaded one of the inter-control node links, the selecting
7 including a determining a cost for each of the connections carried by the overloaded
8 link.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising determining the cost for each of
2 the connections carried by the overloaded link as a function of (1) a number of inter-
3 control links involved in the connection, and (2) an inter-control link bandwidth
4 required by the connection .

1 11. The method of claim 9, determining the cost for each of the connections
2 carried by the overloaded link by multiplying a number of inter-control links involved
3 in the connection and an inter-control link bandwidth required by the connection.

1 12. The method of claim 9, wherein the selecting includes determining a most
2 costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link, and wherein the most
3 costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link becomes a candidate
4 connection for handover.

1 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising determining a target one of the
2 plural control nodes to which the control of the candidate connection can be handed
3 over, the target control node being a control node involved in the candidate connection
4 which is farthest from the first control node.

1 14. The method of claim 9, wherein the selecting step is performed when an
2 attempt is made to add a new connection or new leg of a connection to the radio access
3 network, and wherein when hand over of control of the candidate connection to the
4 target control node is unacceptable to the network, a number of the inter-control node
5 links which can be utilized by the new connection or new leg of the connection is
6 decreased before reattempting the selecting step.

1 ~~15.~~ A handover selection function which makes a selection regarding which of
2 plural connections handled by the radio access network should have control thereof
3 moved from a first control node to another of plural control nodes of a radio access
4 network to alleviate congestion on an overloaded one of inter-control node links
5 connecting the plural control nodes, the selection including making a determination of a
6 cost for each of the connections carried by the overloaded link.

1 16. The function of claim 15, wherein the function is performed at one of the
2 plural control nodes of the radio access network..

1 17. The function of claim 15, wherein the function is performed at a core
2 network node.

1 18. The function of claim 15, wherein the cost for each of the connections
2 carried by the overloaded link depends on (1) a number of inter-control links involved
3 in the connection, and (2) an inter-control link bandwidth required by the connection .

1 19. The function of claim 15, wherein the cost for each of the connections
2 carried by the overloaded link is a product of a number of inter-control links involved in
3 the connection and an inter-control link bandwidth required by the connection.

1 20. The function of claim 15, wherein the selection includes a determination of a
2 most costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link, and wherein the most
3 costly one of the connections carried by the overloaded link becomes a candidate
4 connection for handover.

1 21. The function of claim 20, wherein the handover selection function further
2 determines a target one of the plural control nodes to which the control of the candidate

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3 connection can be handed over, the target control node being a control node involved in
4 the candidate connection which is farthest from the first control node.

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1 22. The function of claim 15, wherein the handover selection function makes the
2 selection when an attempt is made to add a new connection or new leg of a connection
3 to the radio access network, and wherein when hand over of control of the candidate
4 connection to the target control node is unacceptable to the network, the handover
5 selection function decreases a number of the inter-control node links which can be
6 utilized by the new connection or new leg of the connection before reattempting its
7 selection.

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